



## ALLIANCE OF ARTISTS COMMUNITIES

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*Executive Director*

March 31, 2009

Dear Member of Congress,

**The Alliance of Artists Communities is pleased to be a National Co-Sponsor of Arts Advocacy Day 2009.** As the professional association for artists' communities, colonies and residency programs across the United States, the Alliance operates on the premise that support for the cultivation of new art and ideas is essential to human progress. Artists' communities serve as research-and-development labs for the arts, providing artists—including visual artists, writers, composers, choreographers, and others—a critical opportunity to address the most challenging issues we face today in an environment that encourages risk-taking and experimentation that are essential to innovation.

**On behalf of our member organizations and the over 15,000 artists they serve annually, we urge you to support increased funding for our nation's cultural agencies:** the National Endowment for the Arts; the National Endowment for the Humanities; and the Office of Museum Services. The core funding programs of these cultural agencies are critical to nurturing the growth and artistic excellence of thousands of organizations and artists in every corner of the country.

Additionally, many artists' communities include cultural exchange as a core part of their missions. Exchange among artists from different cultures and backgrounds, as well as connection of foreign guest artists to other community members, is critical to the vitality of American culture. The need for international connections on a people-to-people basis toward greater diplomacy is more important now than ever. For these reasons **we strongly ask that you support improving the visa process for foreign guest artists at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.**

Lastly, **we ask that you support tax policy that continues the great American tradition of philanthropy for non-profit organizations.** Enhanced tax deductibility for charitable gifts supports America's non-profit arts organizations and encourages individual citizens to participate more actively in the organizations impacting their communities. We also ask that you support efforts to declare visual artists, writers, and composers equal citizens by allowing them to take a fair-market value deduction for contributions of their own works to cultural organizations.

Again, the Alliance of Artists Communities urges you to support increased funding for our nation's cultural agencies and policies that will strengthen arts organizations and artists. Through these measures we as a nation will maintain our position as a global cultural leader and build a lasting legacy for the next generation.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Strokosch  
Executive Director